
EEOC FORM
715-01 PART E
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service

For Period Covering October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014

Pulled data period of October 12, 2014 from NFC Reporting Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**USDA – Agricultural Research Service
EEOC Management Directive 715 Employment Opportunity Program Plan
FY 2014**

The purpose of this report is to identify trends and barriers impacting the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) efforts to be a model Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer. This report analyzes workforce data by race, gender, and employees with targeted disabilities (TD). One trend that we are not required to monitor, but provides a backdrop to our analysis, is age. **Fifty-eight (58) percent** (3,348) of the ARS workforce (5,733) is **age 50 or over** (4 percent increase from 2013). **Sixty-one (61) percent** (3,508) of the total permanent workforce (5,733) are **eligible for retirement between 2014 and 2024** (1 percent increase). Of the 61 percent (3,508), **16.3 percent** (572) are **grades 13-SES** (6 percent increase) in the identified major occupations.

Part E (continued)

MISSION AREA: Research, Education, and Economics (REE)

The ARS conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products; assess the nutritional needs of Americans; sustain a competitive agricultural economy; enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

This report is more than just numbers. With each targeted group, we compared our numbers to the Civilian Labor Force (CLF). As this report explains in detail, **ARS** is underrepresented in **Hispanic males and females, White females, African American males and females, American Indian males and females, Two or More Races males and females, and Persons with targeted disabilities (Persons with TD).**

One may ask, “Why does ARS care about representation and being inclusive?” The answer is that we care about this because it is one way, however, not the only way, to ensure diversity exists in our workforce and that our representation strives to reflect the population that we serve. **ARS cares about representation and inclusion** because it allows a broader range of intellectual decision making to solve and conduct research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems, establishes parity for all groups that will strengthen and enrich our workforce, employees will see others like themselves, and feel comfortable about entering and staying in our workforce and every employee will feel respected and acknowledged.

1. DESCRIPTION of PERMANENT WORKFORCE

2. CHANGES IN PERMANENT WORKFORCE POPULATIONS

All ARS employees are included in this report. The data is based on information as of October 12, 2014. It represents the workforce demographics of ARS’s permanent workforce by race, gender, and disability in the format required by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Management Directive 715 (MD-715).

Part E (continued)

Based on the EEOC classifications, ARS's reportable employee population is displayed in the following table from largest to smallest (*see Tables A&B1 for details*) – underrepresented groups are highlighted.

Note: 2013 figures changed slightly due to NFC adjustments:

RNO/Gender	FY 2013 Population	FY 2014 Population	Agency representation %/ Net change*	CLF
White male	2,596	2,655	46.31 -0.14	38.33
White female	1,756	1,798	31.36 -0.06	34.03
African American female	322	323	5.63 -0.13	6.53
Asian male	274	288	5.02 +0.12	1.97
African American male	198	209	3.65 +0.10	5.49
Asian female	169	169	2.95 -0.08	1.93
Hispanic male	136	142	2.48 +0.04	5.17
Hispanic female	81	88	1.53 +0.09	4.79
Persons with TD	59	62	1.08 +0.03	2
American Indian male	20	24	0.42 +0.06	0.55
American Indian female	20	19	0.33 -0.03	0.53
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female	6	7	0.12 +0.01	0.07
Two or More Races female	6	5	0.09 -0.02	0.28
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male	4	4	0.07 Same	0.07
Two or More Races male	1	2	0.03 +0.02	0.8
TOTAL**	5,589	5,733	100 0%	

*Net change is the representation difference between FY 2013 and 2014.

**Person with TD are included in the other groups.

Part E (continued)

Groups below CLF	Variance
Hispanic male	152 (156)
Hispanic female	187 (same)
White female	153 (168)
African American male	106 (111)
African American female	52 (50)
American Indian male	8 (same)
American Indian female	12 (same)
Two or More Races male	13 (12)
Two or More Races female	12 (same)
Persons with TD	50 (53)

Grade Distribution – GS-13 – SES (highest to lowest representation based on the grade representation – *see Tables A&B4-1 for details*). White males and females continue to dominate the GS-13 to SES positions. **Note:** The single asterisk indicates that the groups were distributed in the subject grade level at less than their total workforce representation.

Grade	RNO/Gender	Number and Percent within Grade
13 (546 - decrease of 63 since 2013)	White male*	251 (45.97)
	White female*	150 (27.47)
	Asian male	49 (8.97)
	Asian female	27 (4.95)
	African American female*	28 (5.13)
	African American male	21 (3.85)
	Hispanic male*	12 (2.20)
	Persons with TD	7 (1.28)
	Hispanic female*	5 (0.92)
	American Indian male	3 (0.55)
	<i>Two or more races male and female and Native Hawaiian male and female and American Indian female not represented</i>	
<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>		

Part E – Grade Distribution (continued)

14 (635 – decrease of 18)	White male	355 (55.91)
	White female*	120 (18.9)
	Asian male	86 (13.54)
	Asian female	23 (3.62)
	African American male	17 (2.68)
	Hispanic male	10 (1.57)
	African American female*	10 (1.57)
	Hispanic female*	7 (1.1)
	American Indian male	4 (0.63)
	Persons with TD*	4 (0.63)
	Native Hawaiian male	2 (0.31)
	Two or More Races female	1 (0.16)
<p><i>Native Hawaiian females, American Indian females, and Two or More Races males not represented.</i></p> <p><i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i></p>		
15 (710 – increase of 4)	White male	482 (67.89)
	White female*	98 (13.8)
	Asian male	79 (10.98)
	Hispanic male	19 (2.68)
	African American male*	13 (1.83)
	Asian female*	7 (0.99)
	Persons with TD*	5 (0.7)
	Hispanic female*	5 (0.7)
	African American female*	5 (0.7)
	American Indian female*	2 (0.28)
	American Indian male*	1 (0.14)
<p><i>Native Hawaiian males and females, and Two or More Races males and females not represented.</i></p> <p><i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i></p> <p><i>Note: Since 2013, Hispanic GS-15 representation is higher than the workforce representation.</i></p>		

Part E – Grade Distribution (continued)

SES (30 – decrease of 2)	White male	14 (46.67)
	White female*	9 (30)
	African American female	2 (6.67)
	Asian male	2 (6.67)
	American Indian female	1 (3.33)
	Hispanic female	1 (3.33)
	Native Hawaiian male	1 (3.33)
	<i>Hispanic males, African American males, Asian females, Native Hawaiian female, American Indian males, and Persons with TD not represented</i>	
	<i>*Distributed less than total workforce representation</i>	

Mission Critical Occupations

White males and females continue to dominate the mission critical occupations. The following are the groups that fall below the relative labor force (RLF) - *see tables A&B 6 for details (percentage in parentheses is the difference from 2013 unless no changes):*

0404, Biological Technician [1,307 or 23 percent (same) of the ARS total current permanent workforce 5,733]

Hispanic male and female, White male, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander male and female, and Two or More Races male and female.

Note: Since 2013, White females are above the RLF.

0401, General Biological Science [329 or 5.7 percent (-0.3 percent)]

Hispanic male and female, White female, African American male (since 2013), American Indian female, and Person with TD.

No representation Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female, American Indian male, and Two or More Races male and female.

0440, Genetics [246 or 4.2 percent (+0.2 percent)]

Hispanic male and female, White female, African American male, Asian female, American Indian male, and Persons with TD.

No representation for African American female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female.

Part E – Mission Critical Occupations (continued)

1320, Chemistry [240 or 4.18 percent (+0.18 percent)]

White male and female, African American male, Asian female.

No representation for Hispanic female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, Two or More Races male and female and Asian male.

Note: Since 2013, Persons with TD are above the RLF.

0403, Microbiology [224 or 4 percent (same)].

Hispanic male, White female, African American male, Asian female, and American Indian male (the latter three fell below since 2013), and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female and Two or More Races male.

Note: Since 2013, the following groups are above the RLF: African American female.

2210, Information Technology Management [191 or 3.33 (+.33 percent)]

White male, Asian male and female, and Persons with TD.

No representation for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female and Two or More Races male.

0201, Human Resources Management [100 or 1.74 percent (-0.26 percent)]

Hispanic female, White male and female, and Asian female.

No representation for Hispanic male, Asian male, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian male and Two or More Races male.

1102, Contracting [46 or 1 percent (+0.2 percent)]

Hispanic male (no representation in 2013), White male, White female, Asian male.

No representation for Hispanic female, Asian female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian or Alaska Native male and female, and Two or More Race male and female.

1101, General Business and Industry [28 or .481 percent (+0.07 percent)]

Hispanic female, White male, African American male, and Asian male.

No representation for Hispanic male, Asian female, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian or Alaska Native male and female, Two or More Races male and female, and Persons with TD.

Part E (continued)

3. NEW HIRES (129 permanent)

The following are being **hired less than their availability in the CLF** (*see tables A&B 8 for details*): Hispanic male and female, White females, Asian male and female (since 2013), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female (since 2013), and Persons with TD (since 2013).

No hires for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male, American Indian female, and Two or More Races female.

Note: Since 2013, White males were hired at more than their availability in the CLF.

Total for FY 2014	Race/Gender
72	White males
49	White female
10	African American female
13	African American male
6	Hispanic male (none in 2013)
2	Asian male
2	Two or More Races male
2	Asian female
1	Hispanic female
1	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female
1	American Indian male
1	Persons with TD

4. PROMOTIONS

Total employees eligible for Career Ladder Promotions – *see Tables A&B 10 for details*)

514 (251 males and 263 females):

The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS promotion representation (groups underrepresented are bolded):

White male, Asian male, **American Indian female** and **Persons with TD**.

Note 1: Since 2013, the following groups were promoted at a higher percentage than their separation rate: Hispanic male and females and African American male.

Note 2: The following groups had no promotion representation: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female; and Two or More Races female.

Part E – Promotions (continued)

Time in grade in excess of minimum 1-12 months

90 (36 males and 54 females):

The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS promotion representation (groups underrepresented are bolded):

White male, Asian male and **American Indian female** (no promotions in 2013).

Note 1: Since 2013, the following were promoted at a higher percentage than separation percentage: Hispanic female, White female, African American male, Asian male, and Two or More Races male.

Note 2: The following groups had no promotion representation: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, and Two or More Races female, and Persons with TD.

Time in grade in excess of minimum 13-24 months

47 (22 males and 25 females):

The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS promotion representation (all had higher promotion rate in 2013): **White** male, Asian female, and **Persons with TD**.

Note 1: Since 2013, the following were promoted at a higher percentage than separation percentage: Hispanic male and female, African American female, Asian female, and White female.

Note 2: The following groups had no promotion representation: African American male, Asian male, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian male and female, and Two or More Races male and female.

Time in grade in excess of minimum 25+ months

310 (156 males and 154 females):

The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS promotion representation:

White male, African American female, Asian male, and **Persons with TD**.

Note 1: Since 2013, the following were promoted at a higher percentage than separation percentage: Hispanic male and female and African American male.

Note 2: The following groups had no promotion representation: Native American or Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Races male and female.

Note: ARS will conduct further research to ensure that promotions are made in an even-handed and non-discriminatory fashion, and that developmental assignments and training are provided to assist with career mobility.

Part E (continued)

5. SEPARATIONS (*see Tables A&B14 for details*):

Voluntary [380 compared to 300 in FY 2013 (increase of 26 percent)] - The following groups continue to separate at more than their representation (underrepresented groups are bolded): White male, **African American female**, and **American Indian female**, **Two or More Races male and female**.

Note 1: Since 2013, **White females** and **Two or More Races females** separated at more than their representation.

Note 2: Since 2013, **Hispanic males and females**, and **African American males and females** are separating at less than their workforce representation.

Involuntary [15 compared to 17 compared in FY 2013 (decrease of 11 percent)] – The following involuntary separated during this reporting period (underrepresented groups are bolded): White male, **White female and African American male and female**.

HRD, coordinating with ODEO is in the process of reviewing and finalizing the REE Policy and Procedure (P&P) 426.1 “Employee Exit Clearance Procedures”. The AD-1126 was established to put in place the Civil Rights Action Team’s (CRAT) recommendation to establish a process to develop trend analysis and evaluation on overall retention issues. That questionnaire was removed from the P&P at the Department’s request, and the Office of Personnel Management’s questionnaire is the new replacement.

In order to continue to meet the CRAT’s recommendation, HRD is coordinating with the ARS Office of the Chief Information Office to have the survey stored on the ARS server in order for the CR offices to continue to collect the data needed for trend analysis and evaluation.

The purpose of the REE Exit Survey is to capture feedback from current employees upon their departure from REE. Survey results will provide a tool to assess and manage turnover and retention. Answers to the survey will be kept completely confidential and individual responses will not be made available to anyone. Upon request, the Agency Civil Rights office will provide periodic aggregate reports to REE leadership.

Part E (continued)

Sixty-one (61) Veterans separated (16 percent of the 380 voluntary separations – decrease of 7 percent since 2013).

SES	2
Grade 15	4
Grade 14	1
Grade 13	2
Grade 12	7
Grade 11	4
Grade 10	4
Grade 9	8
Grade 7	10
Grade 6	8
Grade 5	6
Grade 4	3
Grade 3	2

6. AWARDS (see Tables A&B13 for details):

The following groups were distributed in the awards category at less than their ARS representation:

Time-off – 1-9 hours (178 employees for FY 2014)

Hispanic male (1.69 percent vs. 2.48 percent in workforce);

Hispanic female (0.56 percent vs. 1.53 percent – no representation in 2013)

African American male (3.37 vs. 3.65);

African American female (2.81 vs. 5.63);

Asian male (1.12 vs. 5.02);

Asian female (1.12 vs. 2.95)

Note: No representation Native Hawaiian female (ARS representation = 0.12), Two or More Races male (0.03), and Two or More Races female (0.09).

Since 2013, American Indian male received awards.

Part E – Awards (continued)

Time-off – 9+ hours (968 employees)

Hispanic male (1.14 percent vs. 2.48 percent in workforce);

Hispanic female (1.45 vs. 1.53);

White male (44.01 vs. 46.31);

African American male (2.69 vs. 3.65);

Asian male (2.69 vs. 5.02);

Asian female (1.76 vs. 2.95);

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander female (0.1 vs. 0.12)

Persons with TD (0.93 vs. 1.08)

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male (0.07) Two or More Races male (0.035).

Since 2013, award representation for the following was higher than their workforce representation: American Indian males and females.

Cash Awards - \$100-\$500 (806 employees)

White male (36.65 vs. 46.31);

Asian male (2.36 vs. 5.02);

American Indian male (0.37 vs. 0.42);

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male (0.07) and female (0.12), and Two or More Races female (0.09).

Since 2013, award representation for Asian female, Native Hawaiian male, and Two or More Races female was higher than their workforce representation.

Cash Awards - \$501+ (3,575 employees)

Hispanic male (2.13 vs. 2.48)

Hispanic female (1.45 vs. 1.53);

African American male (2.32 vs. 3.65);

African American female (4.92 vs. 5.63);

Asian female (2.91 vs. 2.95);

Native Hawaiian female (0.08 vs. 0.12);

American Indian male (0.31 vs. 0.39);

American Indian female (0.22 vs. 0.33)

Two or More Races female (0.06 vs. 0.09);

Persons with TD (0.62 vs. 1.08)

Note: No representation for Two or More Races male (0.03).

Since 2013, award representation for White female and Native Hawaiian male was higher than their workforce representation.

Part E – Awards (continued)

Quality Step Increases (510 employees)

Hispanic male (2.16 vs. 2.48);

White male (36.47 vs. 46.31);

African American male (1.37 vs. 3.65);

American Indian female (0.20 vs. 0.33)

Note: No representation for Native Hawaiian male (0.07), American Indian male (0.42), and Two or More Races male (0.03) and female (0.09).

SES Cash Awards (30 employees)

White female (30 vs. 31.36);

African American female (3.33 vs. 5.63);

Asian male (3.33 vs. 5.02)

Note: No representation for Hispanic male (2.48), Hispanic female (1.53), African American male (3.65), Asian female (2.95), American Indian male (0.42), American Indian female (0.33), and Persons with TD (1.08).

7. **Recruitment and Retention of Veterans**

1. **Establishing a structure dedicated to employing Veterans**

The Administrator issues the Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement annually aligning with the Secretary's Civil Rights Policy Statement. The policy statement holds employees accountable to be proactive in creating and maintaining a competitive and qualified diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of today's society and states that disciplinary action will be taken for conduct or behavior that indicates discrimination, sexual or non-sexual harassment, and retaliation. The statement reflects the Agency's affirmative commitment to employment of eligible disabled veterans. It is ARS's policy to create a work environment which promotes and encourages the recruitment, hiring, retention, career development and advancement of all disabled Veterans.

ARS ensures that disabled employees have accommodations needed to assist in carrying out the duties assigned for their positions. Employees with disabilities are regularly consulted on any barriers that may impair their ability to compete in the workplace because of disability.

Part E – Veterans (continued)

VETERAN HIRES (permanent)

During FY 2014, ARS hired 67 permanent veterans (increase of 8 percent or 5 since 2013).

SES	3
Grade 15	3
Grade 14	1
Grade 13	2
Grade 12	8
Grade 11	6
Grade 10	7
Grade 9	8
Grade 8	2
Grade 7	7
Grade 6	10
Grade 5	6
Grade 4	2
Grade 3	2

Four reported non-targeted disabilities.

ARS employs approximately 477 veterans (-109 from 2013).

2. Providing employment counseling and skill training to transitioning service members

ARS includes a name and number of a human resources specialist on all of our vacancy announcements so applicants have someone to contact if they have questions or concerns or want to obtain reasonable accommodation for any part of the application process. Announcements include OPM's Vet Guide web site address and directions on how to access veterans' information.

ARS allocates sufficient resources for training opportunities and education programs designed to provide maximum opportunities for disabled employees to advance. Supervisors and managers are very mindful of the ARS disability program obligation and continue to demonstrate a firm commitment to help disabled employees reach their potential. Career counseling is available.

ARS conducts periodic assessment to monitor progress, identifies areas where barriers may exist to exclude disabled employees, and develops plans to eliminate those barriers.

3. Implementing a marketing campaign to inform Veterans about ARS employment opportunities

ARS continued to use a variety of recruitment sources such as conferences, hiring, fairs, briefings, vocational rehabilitation, Facebook and Twitter as outreach and recruitment sources to employ veterans and disabled veterans. Recruitment sources and activities are listed in Part J (TAB 8).

ARS is the only agency in the REE mission area that has the authority to recruit outside hires through the Demonstration Project (DEMO authority). The use of DEMO authority gives veterans greater preference than the preference given to them by standard OPM hiring procedures.

4. Building a mechanism to provide timely employment information and resources to Veterans

ARS includes a name and number of a human resources specialist on all of our vacancy announcements so applicants have someone to contact if they have questions or concerns or want to obtain reasonable accommodation for any part of the application process. Announcements include OPM's Vet Guide web site address and directions on how to access veterans' information.

ARS promoted the referral for noncompetitive consideration of all qualified disabled Veterans and supported Federal and Departmental initiatives, which included exploring all employment opportunities that integrated veterans into the workforce. ARS will continue to:

- Ensure that recruitment efforts are consistently coordinated in order to obtain maximum effectiveness and efficiency where appropriate.
- Ensure that recruitment announcements and literature reflect the Agency's desire to reach all segments of potential workforce, including eligible disabled candidates.
- Proactively look for opportunities to use the Veterans Readjustment Authority to fill vacancies.
- Strengthen and expand resources for obtaining resumes of disabled veterans.
- Publish vacancy announcement that include information indicating expanded eligibility for preference eligible in accordance with the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act.

Part E (continued)

8. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (permanent) – percentages based on total workforce of 5,733 (percentages are about the same as reported in 2013 quarter unless indicated)

DESCRIPTION	NONE	NOT IDENTIFIED	REPORTABLE <i>(excludes Targeted)</i>	TARGETED
Total Workforce (5,733)	5,191 or 90.76% (-0.26%)	113 or 2% (+0.06%)	355 or 6.19% (-1.81%)	62 or 1.08% (-0.01%)
New Hires (159)	128 or 80.5% (+2.21%)	7 or 4.4% (-1.03%)	23 or 12.1% (-3.9%)	1 or .63% (-0.15%)
Promotions (514)	466 or 90.66% (-.77%)	12 or 2.33% (+0.31%)	31 or 6.03% (-0.9%)	5 or 0.97% (+0.35%)
Separations (380)	333 or 87.63% (+0.74%)	8 or 2.11% (-0.19%)	31 or 8.15% (-0.85%)	7 or 1.84% (-0.46%)
AWARDS				
Time off 1-9 hours (178)	157 or 88.2% (+0.57%)	1 or 0.56% 0.15%)	16 or 9% (same)	3 or 2.25% (+0.11%)
Time off 9+ hours (968)	880 or 90.91% (-0.39%)	9 or 0.93% (+0.06%)	70 or 7.2% (+0.2%)	9 or 0.93% (-0.05%)
Cash awards - \$100 - \$500 (806)	723 or 89.7 89.81% (-0.11%)	14 or 1.74% (-0.61%)	54 or 6.69 or 7% (-0.31%)	15 or 1.86 (-0.15%)
Cash awards \$500+ (3,575)	3,300 or 92.31% (+0.07%)	72 or 2.01% (-0.14%)	181 or 5.06% (+0.06%)	22 or 0.62% (+0.07%)
Quality Step Increases (510)	468 or 91.76% (same)	6 or 1.1% (+0.12%)	32 or 6.27% (+0.27%)	4 or 0.78 (same)

UPDATE OF ARS SELF-ASSESSMENT (Part G)

The following summarizes ARS's effort to meet the EEOC's six essential elements:

ARS continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to equal opportunity for all employees, applicants, and service recipients. The 2014 Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy Statements were completed; however, they were placed on hold under the direction of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR), Policy Division. Until this delay, on an annual basis, ARS' practice has been to send the policies (in addition to the Secretary's statement and other USDA policies) to all ARS employees, in addition to Areas posting the policies in a visible location, and placed on the ARS home page. In 2013, the statements were placed in each employee's AgLearn learning history. Once the employees read the policy statements, the AgLearn accounts were updated stating that they had read and understand the policies. One hundred (100) percent of the employees certified they read and understood the policy statements. The same will be done in calendar year 2014 upon approval to move forward from OASCR, Policy Division.

Part E – Self-Assessment (continued)

Managers and supervisors are evaluated through their performance plans regarding their commitment to ARS EEO policies and principles.

Trainings:

- ARS' completion percentage rates for the No Fear Comprehensive and No Fear Refresher Training remain at 100 percent.
- ARS participated in conjunction with the Department, a Reasonable Accommodation Webinar presented by the EEOC - 120 ARS employees participated nationwide.
- ARS participated in the Telework/Reasonable Accommodation Webinar conducted by the Department - 85 ARS employees participated.
- ARS participated in the Target Center's Sign Language Interpretive Process Webinar - 45 employees participated.
- The REE Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager conducted a Reasonable Accommodation Briefing for National Institute of Food and Agriculture/ARS employees - 26 ARS employees participated.
- ARS participated in the Department's Federal Emergency Preparedness Webinar for People with Disabilities – 40 ARS employees participated.
- Diversity Training and Awareness – 75 percent of ARS employees have currently completed the Department's mandatory Diversity and Inclusion Training due by July 31, 2014.

Essential Element B: Integration of EEO into the Agency's Strategic Mission

ARS achieved 97 percent of the goals in the ARS Strategic Plan (increase of 10 percent since 2013).

Reporting to the Agency Head

The Director of the ARS, Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) reports directly to the Administrator. The Director serves as an advisor to the Administrator and Associates and retains a seat on the Administrator's Council (senior management team), thereby preserving visibility and influence at the Agency level. The ODEO Director and staff (including Area ODEO Program Managers) continue to provide information to employees and customers regarding recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, selections for training/career development opportunities, and other workforce changes.

The ODEO Director presented the state of the EEO program to the newly appointed Administrator (African American female) upon her entering that position.

Part E – Self-Assessment (continued)

Essential Element C: Management and Program Accountability

- ARS holds managers and supervisors accountable for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce through the REE Recruitment Agreement, in particular, Appendix A, which requires the ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity.
- Since 2001, with the exception of 2013 because the ARS awards program was being revised, ARS recognizes its employees for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity. There are two categories – supervisory and non-supervisory. Annual nominations are solicited and designed to provide an opportunity for all employees in different occupational series to fairly compete for the award. The award panels diverse and include minority representation. Requests for panelists are made to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and all USDA Civil Rights Directors.

ARS Holding Managers and Supervisors Accountable for Achieving a Diverse Work Force

It is ARS's goal to ensure leadership accountability for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. To achieve this goal, ARS has implemented the USDA Diversity Road Map by accomplishing the following:

1. Leadership Accountability and Commitment

Diversity Officer

The Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Director is the ARS Diversity Officer.

Establish and Maintain Special Emphasis Working Group

ARS has National Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) serving on advisory councils for Asian American and Pacific Islanders; African Americans; Persons with Disabilities; Hispanics; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered; Native Americans; Women; and Veterans. The ODEO Area Program Managers serve as the Area SEPMs, except for the Pacific West Area, whom has SEPMs in each location.

SES Incorporate Diversity Goals in Performance Plans

All GS-15 and below supervisors within ARS had goals related to the Secretary's Cultural Transformation and USDA Diversity Roadmap added to their performance requirements in the Supervision and Human Capital Management Performance Element.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

Provide Monthly Reports to OHRM

ARS submits monthly reports by the 15th of each month to the Department on employee engagement efforts. Additionally, ARS submits quarterly reports to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights on overall demographics (total workforce including veterans and persons with disabilities), hires, promotions (competitive and non-competitive by grade only), separations, awards, executive summary identifying the gaps in under- representation and action items that are being pursued according to the Part I of the MD-715. The quarterly reports are shared with the Administrative Council (ARS' senior management team).

Evaluate Staffing/Hiring Process

In compliance with the on-boarding requirements, all supervisors are utilizing the Supervisor's On-boarding checklist to ensure all new employees are provided essential information. In addition, all new employees are being assigned a Sponsor to assist them.

ARS continues to hold managers and supervisors accountable for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce through the REE Recruitment Agreement, in particular, Appendix A, which requires the ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity.

The Administrator established a group consisting of the Administrator's Chief of Staff, Director of the Office of the Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity, and staff from the Administrative and Financial Management (Deputy Administrator and Directors of HRD, Budget, etc.). The group developed a draft recruitment plan titled "ARS Workforce Strategy for Increased Diversity" and submitted to the Administrator to be implemented in FY 2015.

Conduct Workforce Analysis

Through the MD-715 process, ARS conducts a workforce analysis to identify areas of underrepresentation at all grade levels and occupations, with emphasis on GS-13 to SES position and mission critical occupations. ODEO and HRD continue to work together to eliminate the barriers identified by conducting an analysis, that prevent diversity within the workforce.

Result: Based on data from the National Finance Center Reporting Center, statistical analysis shows that the following remain under the Civilian Labor Force (CLF): Hispanic males and females, African American males and females, White females, American Indian male and females (since 2013), Two or More Races males and females, and Persons with TD. The percentage of ARS employees with targeted disabilities remains below the required 2 percent. ARS continues to conduct outreach activities to educate possible applicants on ARS career opportunities focusing on broadening the diversity in the applicant pool.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

Using End-of-Year Funds to Develop Initiatives to Enhance Professional Development

The Administrator and the Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Financial Management continue to stress to the Administrative Council (ARS senior management) the importance of utilizing the career development and mentoring programs. Six employees attended the OPM Management Development Center and two employees attended the Executive Leadership Program.

2. Outreach and Partnership

Establish Partnerships with Minority-Serving Groups and Employee Associations

Although ARS does not have formal established partnerships with the Federally Employee Women, the Federal Asian Pacific American Council, American Association of People with Disabilities, Blacks in Government, Asian American Government Executive Network, League of United Latin American Citizens, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered, National Image Inc., Society of American Indian Government Employees, and Student Veterans of America, ARS has continuously supported their annual training events to include shared exhibit space with USDA-wide conference coordination and provided information about the Agency as well as encouraged the general memberships to apply for vacancies.

Provide Outreach and Funding to Minority-Serving Institutions (data is for FY 2013 – current data not available until end of FY 2014)

ARS provided over \$7.6 million in cooperative research funding to minority-serving institutions.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)	\$866,895
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)	\$2,458,972
Predominately Black Institutions	\$15,000
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)	\$47,069
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions	\$3,514,501
American Indian and Alaska Native Serving Institutions	\$849,292

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

3. Recruitment and Hiring

Develop Strategic Marketing Recruitment Tools and Advertisement of Employment Opportunities

The ARS continues to utilize the “Follow Your Dreams and Change the World” recruitment poster developed by the Office of Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity, Outreach and Recruitment Branch and the Office of Communications featuring Glenn Cason, a former USDA/1890 and student intern sponsored by ARS ODEO. As part of Mr. Cason’s internship, ARS was able to create/expand partnerships with land-grant institutions, OGC, and National Ag Law Center to help increase underrepresented groups in the ag law fields, including civil rights. Mr. Cason is currently working for USDA-Office of General Counsel on behalf of ARS.

The Administrator established a group consisting of the Administrator’s Chief of Staff, Director of the Office of the Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity, and staff from the Administrative and Financial Management (Deputy Administrator and Directors of HRD, Budget, etc.). The group developed a draft recruitment plan titled “ARS Workforce Strategy for Increased Diversity” and submitted to the Administrator to be implemented in FY 2015.

Areas/Locations continue outreach activities at K-12 schools, 1862 colleges/universities, minority serving institutions and other organizations to educate students about ARS career opportunities. Coordinate with the ARS Outreach and Recruitment Branch and the Information Staff K-12 Outreach Coordinator.

ARS requires workforce demographic data to be included in recruitment requests/approvals (REE Recruitment Agreement – Appendix A). Each permanent recruitment process requires that one of the ODEO Program Managers or ODEO staff serve as a non-voting member of the panel in the role of EEO Observer to ensure that the entire review process is fair, equitable and in alignment with CR/EEO policies.

On a weekly basis the ARS Recruitment Office submits vacancy announcements to a ListServe that reaches over 5,000 institutions/organizations which serve underrepresented groups and persons with disabilities.

Establish Strategies and Implement Programs to Target Recruitment Efforts Based on MD-715

67 veterans were hired – 8 percent increase from 2013 (42 percent of the 159 permanent total hires).

ARS hired or converted 6 individuals under the Schedule A hiring authority.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

Based on the MD-715 plans to increase diversity, ARS will continue to conduct outreach activities in K-12 schools, minority serving colleges and universities and organization to increase the representation of the following groups that continue to fall below the Civilian Labor Force: Hispanics, African Americans, White females, American Indians, Two or More Races, and Persons with Targeted Disabilities.

Feedback has been solicited on the *ARS Succession and Workforce Plan* from ARS executives, more than 300 managers, and the unions. The plan is being updated to incorporate the feedback received and will be forwarded to Dr. Jacobs-Young for approval. A final, approved plan is anticipated by December 31, 2014. This plan will help to guide recruitment and succession planning through 2017.

The Administrator established a group consisting of the Administrator's Chief of Staff, Director of the Office of the Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity, and staff from the Administrative and Financial Management (Deputy Administrator and Directors of HRD, Budget, etc.). The group developed a draft recruitment plan titled "ARS Workforce Strategy for Increased Diversity" and submitted to the Administrator to be implemented in FY 2015.

ARS continues to utilize the DR-4020-250-002, Position Management and Vacancy Control. ARS expects all hiring managers to complete the associated checklist, which requires hiring managers to consider special hiring authorities; consult with the Area Office of Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Program Managers on hiring/recruitment efforts and outreach; to review current workforce profile data and stated agency diversity goals and the statement of efforts to address underrepresentation. In addition to the checklist required by the DR, ARS managers are being required to review the OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities before they can move forward with the competitive hiring process.

Increasing veteran hires by 75 percent or 62 veterans: Accomplished
During FY 2014, ARS hired 67 permanent veterans (increase of 8 percent or 5 since 2013). ARS employs approximately 477 veterans (-109 from 2013).

ARS will continue to analyze the diversity rates of student hires to develop additional outreach programs and hiring manager guidance. One of the ways we hope to increase hiring of persons with targeted disabilities is the increased utilization of the OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities.

Result: These actions may present the opportunity to increase the potential pool of minority applicants and persons with targeted disabilities available for employment.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

ARS continues to utilize the Department Regulation (DR), Position Management and Vacancy Control, DR-4020-250-002. ARS expects all hiring managers to complete the associated checklist, which requires hiring managers to consider special hiring authorities; consult with ODEO Program Managers on hiring/recruitment efforts and outreach; to review current workforce profile data and stated agency diversity goals and the statement of efforts to address underrepresentation. In addition to the checklist required by the DR, ARS managers are being required to review the OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities before they can move forward with the competitive hiring process.

Publish Workforce Information

The MD-715 is shared with the Administrator's Council (senior management), plus the Area Outreach, Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) Program Manager distributes to their hiring managers. The executive summary of the MD-715 plus general information about the MD-715 is posted at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/AboutUs/docs.htm?docid=23090>.

Agencies Survey Demographics Data on Quarterly Basis

Quarterly reports are submitted to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. The report is also shared with the senior management, plus submitted to the Area ODEO Program Manager to distribute to their hiring managers.

Establish and Implement Strategies to Increase Hiring People with Disabilities and Veterans

Based on the highly technical nature of our research scientist and scientific support positions, the agency receives relatively few qualified applications from individuals with targeted disabilities. In order to address this barrier, we have focused our outreach efforts on positions for which there is a larger pool of potential candidates with disabilities such as office support, technician, and wage system positions. Additionally, special initiatives will include continued participation on the "Workforce Recruitment Program" which targets college students and recent college graduates with disabilities and the use of open continuous vacancy announcements which specifically solicit candidates with non-disqualifying disabilities. Throughout the fiscal year, HRD has reminded hiring managers of the hiring flexibilities and resources, such as the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Shared List of People with Disabilities, available to them for hiring persons with targeted disabilities. The HRD Recruitment Staff developed a brochure and poster for job seekers with disabilities to be used at recruitment fairs and events targeting persons with disabilities and promoting ARS as the employer of choice. **ARS hired or converted 6 individuals** (decrease of 7 since 2013) **under the Schedule A hiring authority.**

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

ARS hired 67 permanent veterans (increase of 8 percent or 5 since 2013).
ARS employs approximately 477 veterans (-109 from 2013).

Develop and Implement a Hiring Plan for 2013 Summer Intern Program

ARS utilized the Department's request for summer student hiring statistics (including RNO data) to remind managers of the requirement to remain cognizant of diversity in their summer student hiring efforts. As of June 30, 2014, Hispanic students fall below the CLF. All other groups were slightly above or equal to the CLF which was about the same in 2013, except Asians increased to 9 percent from 5 percent.

4. Retention and Promotion

Establish Baseline and Track Data and Monitor Results Regarding Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Employees in Underrepresented Groups

On a quarterly basis, ARS continues to monitor and track data regarding the hiring, retention, and promotion of employees in groups under the Civilian Labor Force (Hispanics, African Americans, White females, American Indians, Two or More Races, and Persons with Targeted Disabilities) utilizing FY 2011 as a baseline:

Hires (as of second quarter):

Hispanic males	+100 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 6)
Hispanic females	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 2)
White females	-23 percent (FY 2011 = 64; FY 2014 = 49)
AA/Black males	-33 percent (FY 2011 = 15; FY 2014 = 10)
AA/Black females	-43 percent (FY 2011 = 23; FY 2014 = 13)
Am. Indian males	- 67 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 1)
Two+ Races males	+100 percent (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2014 = 2)
Persons with TD	Same (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2014 = 1)

Note: No hires for American Indian females or Two or More Races females.

Separations :

Hispanic males	-43 percent (FY 2011 = 7; FY 2014 = 4)
Hispanic females	-50 percent (FY 2011 = 8; FY 2014 = 4)
White females	-17 percent (FY 2011 = 137; FY 2014 = 114)
AA/Black males	-38 percent (FY 2011 = 13; FY 2014 = 8)
AA/Black females	-21 percent (FY 2011 = 28; FY 2014 = 22)
Am. Indian males	Same (0)
Am. Indian females	Same (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 3)
Two+ Races males	+100 percent (FY 2011 = 0; FY 2014 = 1)
Two+ Races females	Same (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2014 = 1)
Persons with TD	+133 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 7)

Note: The following groups were distributed in separations at more than their ARS promotion representation (groups underrepresented are bolded): White male, Asian male, **American Indian female**, and **Persons with TD**.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C – Retention and Promotion (continued)

Promotions:

Hispanic males	-50 percent (FY 2011 = 26; FY 2014 = 13)
Hispanic females	-65 percent (FY 2011 = 23; FY 2014 = 8)
White females	-39 percent (FY 2011 = 337; FY 2014 = 205)
AA/Black males	-48 percent (FY 2011 = 33; FY 2014 = 17)
AA/Black females	-48 percent (FY 2011 = 66; FY 2014 = 34)
Am. Indian males	Same (0) (FY 2011 = 4; FY 2014 = 4)
Am. Indian females	-66 percent (FY 2011 = 3; FY 2014 = 1)
Two+ Races males	Same (FY 2011 = 1; FY 2014 = 1)
Two+ Races females	-100 percent (FY 2011 = 2; FY 2014 = 0)
Persons with TD	-28 percent (FY 2011 = 7; FY 2014 = 5)

The agency does not track the information required by the MD-715 worktables A&B7, *Applications and Hires* (Note: On July 10, 2014, HR advised ODEO that number of applicants identifying their gender and race can be obtained from One USDA eRecruit system, however, it is unclear if the remaining information can be obtained (qualified of those identified; selected of those identified). ODEO will continue to work with HR regarding the collection of this data.

Conduct Exit Survey Interviews

NOT ACCOMPLISHED, however, process has begun to implement by October 1, 2016.

Using the Preliminary USDA Exit Survey as a model (which was itself based upon an OPM version, but never made it past the proposal stage within the Department) a proposed exit survey has been developed by HR in a collaborative effort with ODEO. A tentative directive detailing the process by which the surveys are to be conducted and how the resulting data will be processed and utilized has been produced. The plan is to re-implement formal exit survey interviews by October 1, 2016. Currently some interviews are being conducted, however, not consistent throughout ARS.

OHRM Will Implement On-Boarding in First Quarter 2011

In compliance with the On-boarding requirements, all supervisors are utilizing the Supervisor's On-boarding checklist to ensure all new employees are provided essential information. In addition, all new employees are being assigned a Sponsor to assist them.

5. Diversity Training and Awareness

OHRM Will Provide to Enable Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs)

The majority of the SEPMs are/have:

- are certified from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Training Institute for the EEO Training for New EEO Counselors.
- completed the ARS ODEO sponsored Civil Rights Impact Analysis Training conducted by the OASCR in FY 2012.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C – Retention and Promotion (continued)

- completed the ARS ODEO sponsored Compliance Review Training conducted by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (2013).
- completed SEPM training provided by the OASCR or Graduate School.
- 3 of the 7 (Veterans and Disabled SEPM is the same) attended the August 13, 2014 training in the Jefferson Auditorium; the others will attend virtually when OHRM announces.

Conduct Diversity Training

As of June 30, 2014, 75 percent of ARS employees have currently completed the Department's mandatory Diversity and Inclusion Training due by July 31, 2014.

ARS training includes, but is not limited to educational videos and Agency-sponsored courses through AgLearn. The following are examples:

- Two NoFEAR Refresher and Comprehensive Training
- ARS Disability Program Manager sponsored an ARS/EEOC Reasonable Accommodation webinar for approximately 185 participants.
- The ODEO Cooperative Resolution Program Staff continued to conduct training.

Plan and Execute a Multicultural Day OHRM Will Provide Training to Enable Special Emphasis Program Managers

ARS has not planned a multicultural day nor to our knowledge has OHRM provided training. ARS employees attend the Special Emphasis Program observances in person or via video (after the observance). Additionally, the eight Areas/Locations sponsor events to educate employees of cultural differences and to value, respect, and be allowed to perform at their fullest potential.

Establish New Category for Honor Awards that Recognizes Accomplishments in Diversity and Recruitment

Since 2001, with the exception of 2013, ARS continues to recognize its employees for exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity. There are two categories – supervisory and non-supervisory. Annual nominations are solicited and designed to provide an opportunity for all employees in different occupational series to fairly compete for the award. The award panels are diverse and include minority representation. Requests are made to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and Civil Rights Directors for panelists.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C – Retention and Promotion (continued)

Establish a Multi-faceted Communications Plan Utilizing Social Media to Ensure Leaders, Supervisors, and Employees Understand USDA's Commitment to Diversity and Accountability

Tools used to communicate with external customers:

- ARS' *Your Two Cents* (Y2C) and Cultural Transformation (CT) website incorporates a variety of social media tools to connect and inform employees about relevant information. The CT site specifically uses several tools (blogs, tool kit, discussion board, video—the ARS CT video was placed in all ARS employees learning plans in AgLearn—and other interactive features that are characteristic of social media tools (<http://ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents/CTBlog/index.html>). These tools are designed to inform ARS employees about CT issues that impact or are relevant to them. In addition, the *ARS & You* newsletter features a monthly blurb with updates on both of these initiatives, as well as a quarterly letter from Dr. Knipling that covers items of importance to ARS employees.
- ARS and REE newsletters. ARS also contributes articles to the USDA CT newsletter.
- AFM uses USDA Connect (minimal use – has been determined that employees are not utilizing) and SharePoint to communicate with ARS employees regarding restructuring and other issues.

6. Employee Development and Recognition

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Have Individual Development Plans (IDPs) Through AgLearn and Virtual University

ARS uses form ARS-48 to complete their IDPs and not the automated AgLearn-based IDP. Virtual University (essentially USDA's Training Department) provides no tools or manner by which IDP participation rate can be tracked. However, ARS does track overall participation rate (and completion of mid-year IDP reviews) via a SharePoint-based manual reporting application.

ARS's has mandated that supervisors will ensure that all employees participate in the IDP process. ARS's performance exceeded the goals established in the Cultural Transformation Plan, with an overall IDP completion rate for FY 2014 over 99 percent, and over 96 percent completion rate for the mid-year counseling. These participation rates were not further broken down for demographic evaluation.

ARS promotes the message that effective leadership is what drives the organization towards success. Every individual in the agency is a leader and is accountable for his/her own career development. The use of IDPs translates this message as it is a tool that is visible, tangible evidence that leadership development is taking place.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

We encourage supervisors and managers to use this tool as a way to drive accountability for development, and most importantly, to help foster a two-way commitment between the employee and themselves on what must be done to grow.

ARS is tracking the establishment of IDPs/Completion of Mid-Term Counseling on a quarterly basis. This is accomplished through the solicitation of supervisors and managers and their certifying that IDPs are established for their employees. ARS' IDP establishment is currently at a successful 96 percent. For those employees that don't have an IDP in place, appropriate supervisory and managerial officials are contacted. An explanation must be provided for non-establishment of IDP and/or an IDP is readily established. ARS is actively working with the appropriate chain of commands to address the deficiencies on an individual employee basis in order to obtain a 100 percent completion rate of IDPs. This effort helps to improve organizational performance and accountability. ARS is created and launched an IDP PowerPoint Training Pilot in AgLearn at the end of FY 2011 that will be available 24/7 to all REE employees. Classroom and Webinar live-training courses are also available and thus far, over 250 ARS personnel have participated. Courses are offered on a periodic in the DC metropolitan area, or as requested at worksites across the United States. On demand, one-on-one IDP counseling is provided and 22 employees took advantage of the service in FY 2014. Future implementation will be based on the results from the latest Federal Human Capital/Employee Viewpoint Surveys (FEVS) to see if the classes and counseling have had a positive effect.

IDP training is part of the new ARS' Supervisory Training Program, and we will garner some measure of effectiveness based on feedback from survey monkey and noted FEVs. IDPs are also part of the new hire's checklist.

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Have Mentors Through AgLearn and Virtual University

ARS has some very good mentoring programs in ARS. They are, as they should be, specific to local and area situations. The Administrator plans to establish a mentoring month in 2015, where ARS features communications to employees on the benefits through example, books, and sharing of best examples. As part of the On-Boarding Program, all ARS supervisors are required to assign "sponsors" to all new employees.

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Have Coaches through AgLearn and Virtual University

New employees are surveyed after approximately 120 days on the job. ARS is working with the Virtual University as a participant in its Coaching Workgroup to implement USDA coaching best practices and leverage USDA coaching resources at ARS.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element C (continued)

Track Participation Rate of Underrepresented Groups Who Participate in Developmental Details through NFC

According to the OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, details cannot be processed in NFC. Therefore, comprehensive data is not currently available on the participation rate of underrepresented groups who participate in developmental details.

Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention

- Since the last reporting period, ARS commissioned Insightlink Communications to conduct an organization-wide climate to gauge employees' satisfaction on a number of issues, with a particular emphasis on determining the overall climate of the organization, assessing which factors are contributing to employee satisfaction and which are detracting from their satisfaction. Thirty-three (33) percent or 2,790 of 8,448 employees participated. The report was structured on the basis of 4Cs: Culture, Commitment, Communications, and Compensation.

With overall job satisfaction at 49 percent, ARS is below the national and industry norms and well below the recommended target level (65 percent) for an engaged workforce. The survey results indicate that this score is due to a mixture of positive responses in some areas that are being counterbalanced by lower scores in others. Additionally, in both areas of its strengths and weaknesses, there is some variation in scores among employee groups along the lines of gender, ethnicity and disability status. This suggests that ARS not only needs to build on its strengths and address its weaknesses, it needs to make sure that any improvements are experienced by all employees.

The work itself is a major positive element for ARS, as most employees feel their work is respected (62 percent), interesting (89 percent), and challenging (86 percent). Views of the organization's immediate supervisors tend to be positive (63 percent), although scores are less strong for higher management levels. These favorable ratings are supported by employees' own comments, many of which feature positive statements about the value and enjoyment of ARS' work.

The issues that are impacting overall satisfaction levels at ARS are, for a number of measures, somewhat worse among women, employees of color and those with disabilities. In addition, while ARS' diversity efforts achieve positive scores overall, employees in these groups are generally less certain that the diversity efforts are effective or that policies and promotional opportunities are administered fairly.

A correlation analysis of the factors that drive job satisfaction at ARS, combined with the comments made by employees, do not suggest that discrimination is the primary source of the organizations lower-than-

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element D (continued)

desirable employee scores. Rather, it appears that the organization's systemic issues of lack of training, poor advancement opportunities, weak communication and limited rewards and recognition may be more keenly felt by these group, while still being felt by most employees. Even though ARS should address any instances the organization's more fundamental problems should, in turn, help alleviate these issues among underrepresented groups as well.

The Administrative Council (senior leadership) has been briefed. The Administrator will send a results memorandum to the employees requesting their vote on suggested actions to accomplish five recommendations based on the results of the survey.

- The following displays the number of offers and acceptances regarding the ADR process for informal and formal EEO complaints:

Informal complaints filed: 22 (none accepted)
Formal complaints filed: 19 (4 accepted, no resolution)

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):

Informal: 20 offered, none accepted
Formal: 19 offered, 4 accepted, no resolution

The ARS ODEO staff continues to educate all employees and customers about improving communication through the utilization of our non-EEO early resolution ADR services. The following trainings were conducted:

1st Quarter FY 2014

"Bullying-What It Is and How to Deal With It", National Advisory Council for Office Professionals (NACOP), Leesburg, Virginia (3 sessions)
(57 non-supervisors) – November 13-14, 2013

"Effective Communication: Improving Team Communications",
Aquatic Animal Health Research, Auburn, Alabama
(3 supervisors; 3 employees) – December 4, 2013

4 sessions, 3 supervisors; 60 non-supervisors

2nd Quarter FY2014

"Sharpening Our Communication Skills", Small Animal Section, National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa Visual Teleconference
(8 non-supervisors) – February 4, 2014

1 session, 0 supervisors; 8 non-supervisors

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element D (continued)

3rd Quarter FY2014

“Resolving People Challenges: From Collision to Cooperation”,
2014 PWA Leadership Conference, Albany, California
(77 supervisors) – April 30, 2014

1 session, 77 supervisors; 0 non-supervisors

4th Quarter FY2014

“Communication Strategies Workshop”,
Jamie Whitten Delta State Research Center, Stoneville, Mississippi
(1 supervisor; 10 non-supervisors) – October 2, 2014

1 session, 1 supervisor; 10 non-supervisors

TOTAL FY 2014: 7 sessions, 81 supervisors; 78 non-supervisors

Mediations

15 offers (10 resolved – same as 2013)

Facilitated Dialogues (23 conducted - 2 withdrawn)

Coaching (15)

Part E – Self-Assessment (continued)

Essential Element E: Efficiency

Deficiency: The agency does not track the information required by the MD-715 worktables *A&B7, Applications and Hires* (Note: On July 10, 2014, HR advised ODEO that number of applicants identifying their gender and race can be obtained from One USDA eRecruit system, however, it is unclear if the remaining information can be obtained (qualified of those identified; selected of those identified). ODEO will continue to work with HR regarding the collection of this data.

Note: EEOC published in the Federal Register a revised applicant data form allowing agencies to comment, which ARS did (collaboration of ODEO and HRD). The revision would add disability status of applicants to the collection, thereby allowing the agencies and EEOC to track progress toward meeting the recruitment and hiring strategies developed pursuant to E.O. 13548, Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities.

Essential Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

ARS follows USDA EEOC reporting requirements and complies with EEO orders or directives. The NFC is responsible for payroll processing. Therefore, ARS has no control over the complaint payment process.

Status for FY 2014 Complaints

Informal complaints filed: 22 (none accepted)
Formal complaints filed: 19 (4 accepted, no resolution)

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):

Informal: 20 offered, none accepted
Formal: 19 offered, 4 accepted, no resolution
Monetary Payouts: \$215,649
Investigative costs: \$38,204

CRP continues to take a more informal approach to addressing one-on-one issues by conducting more facilitated dialogues rather than mediation as mentioned above.

Part E – Self-Assessment – Element F (continued)

Counseling Process

In 2014, ARS continued to make progress in improving the efficiency of its complaint processing.

I. **Counseling**

- a. ARS timely processed 100 percent of the 19 **pre-complaint counselings ending for the reporting period.**
- b. ARS will continue to monitor the agencies' counselor training requirements.
- c. The following displays the number of offers and acceptances regarding the ADR process for informal and formal EEO complaints:

Informal: **20 offered, none accepted**

Formal: 19 offered, 4 accepted, no resolution

II. **Bases of Complaints Filed**

- a. The bases of alleged discrimination most raised in formal complaints were reprisal and race
- b. Of the 9 formal complaints filed, 6 contained allegations of race (3 Black, 2 Asian, 1 White), 8 contained allegations of reprisal.

III. **Complaint Processing Times**

Note: Agency investigations are completed by Employment Investigation Division (EID).

- a. EID completed 5 investigations in the 180-day timeframe.
- b. ARS's average processing time for all complaint closures increased from 306 days in FY 2013 to 504 days in FY 2014.
Note: Closures include FAD, settlements, and withdrawals.

Part E – Counseling process (continued)

IV. **Cost**

ARS expended a total of \$38,204 for 13 complaint investigations for an average expenditure of \$2,938.

ARS Use of ADR for EEO Dispute Resolution in FY 2014	Complaints
Completed/Ended Counseling/Complaint Closures	22
Total Number Offered ADR	22
ADR Offer rate	100%
ADR Participation Rate	0
Total ADR Settlements	0 (informal)
Total ADR Settlements Amount	\$0.00

	Total #	#Timely	%
All Pre-complaint Counseling	22	22	100
All Investigations	13	5	
All Complaint Closures	24		
Merit Decisions (no AJ)	7	0	0
Dismissal Decisions (no AJ)	0	0	0

*APD = Average Processing Days

Outcome of Complaints in FY 2014						
	Complaint Closures		FAD* (no AJ Decision)		Final Order (AJ Decision Fully Implemented)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Complaints Filed	9		7	78	8	88
Total Closures	24					
Settlements	7					
Withdrawals	2					
Total FADS	15					
Dismissals	0					
Merit Decisions	7					
Finding Discrimination	1					
Finding No Discrimination	14					

*FAD = Final Agency Decision

Part E – Counseling process (continued)

- A. FAD processing – FADs are administered by the Department’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.
- B. EEO Investigations – Agency investigations are completed by Employment Investigation Division (EID).
- C. Settlement Agreements – ARS does not receive feedback from the Department. If a settlement is reached at the informal stage, the Agency obtains guidance from OGC. At the formal stage, an OGC representative works with management to finalize the terms of the agreement.
Note: ARS Civil Rights Office manages the EEO process completely separate from OGC.
- D. ARS submitted timely submissions of all reports associated with the requirement of the No FEAR Act. ARS’ No FEAR data can be accessed via ODEO’s website <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO> with a link to the USDA’s website <http://www.usda.gov/nofear/ars/indexars.html>.
Note: Complaint processing data is based on the 462 report.

Summary of EEO Plan Objectives to Eliminate Identified Barriers (Part I)

Objective 1

Following the guidance of the USDA Diversity Roadmap, ARS will continue to encourage managers and supervisors to take affirmative steps to recruit, hire, advance and retain employees with low participating rates, including employees with targeted disabilities.

Accomplishments: Although Hispanic males and females, White females, and African American/Black males and females, American Indian males and females (since 2012 with the 2010 CLF – 2000 was used in 2012), and Two or More Races males and females continue to fall under the CLF, all groups have increased in hiring since 2011 (baseline), except for the Hispanic males, African American males and females, and American Indian males.

ARS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in the recruiting process in efforts to increase diversity.

Objective 2

Increase advancement opportunities for women, employees with targeted disabilities, and groups with low participation rates.

Accomplishments: ARS managers and supervisors continue to promote leadership trainings. Six sessions were conducted this year with 13 participants (race and gender data is not captured).

Summary of EEO Plan Objectives to Eliminate Identified Barriers (Part J)

ARS’s goal is to increase the number of hires for Persons with TD by 1 percent based on 74 (2011 baseline) - 1.

Accomplished: 1 hire